

COLEOPTERA IN THE CANADIAN NATIONAL COLLECTION

The Canadian National Collection of Insects is entrusted to the care of the Entomology Research Institute (formerly part of Science Service) of the Department of Agriculture. The Coleoptera occupy one large room (figure 1) and part of the five offices of the curatorial staff of the Coleoptera section (three research officers and two technicians). There are approximately 550,000 specimens of Coleoptera contained in 1,150 U.S.N.M. style drawers and unit trays (figure 2) and housed in steel cabinets. About 50 drawers are now added per year.

The present collection had its beginning in the early 1920's, when the late Norman Criddle of Treesbank, Manitoba, amalgamated the collections of the Department of Agriculture, the Canadian National Museum, W. Hague Harrington, and John D. Evans. The Canadian National Museum, unlike the U. S. National Museum, does not now maintain an insect collection, the housing and building of the collection being entirely under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture. During the past 32 years the collection has been developed systematically by annual collecting surveys (see map), as well as by purchase and exchange, and by contributions from entomologists both professional and amateur. Until 1947 the fauna of northern Canada was poorly represented. The Northern Insect Survey was instituted then, and during the past 12 years 60 surveys were conducted at arctic and subarctic localities. During the same period surveys were conducted in the United States and Mexico.

In general, the collection's coverage decreases from north to south; it is best for arctic Canada and poorest for Mexico, as it contains only 10,000 Mexican beetles. Thus the collection complements other collections of North American beetles. Groups that have received special attention and that are therefore very well represented are the aquatic families, forest Coleoptera, Carabidae, Chrysomelidae, Elateridae, and Scarabaeidae. The collection of Mr. J. B. Wallis, Winnipeg, Manitoba, including types and 40,000

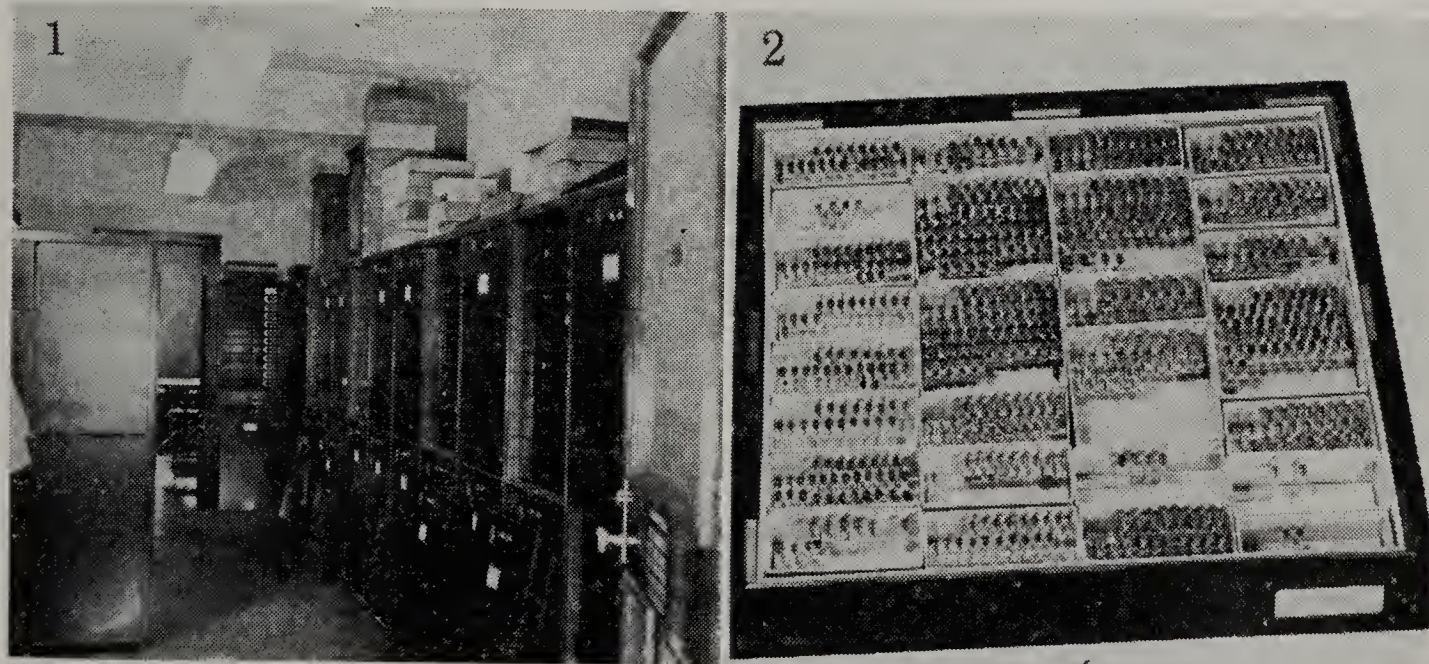
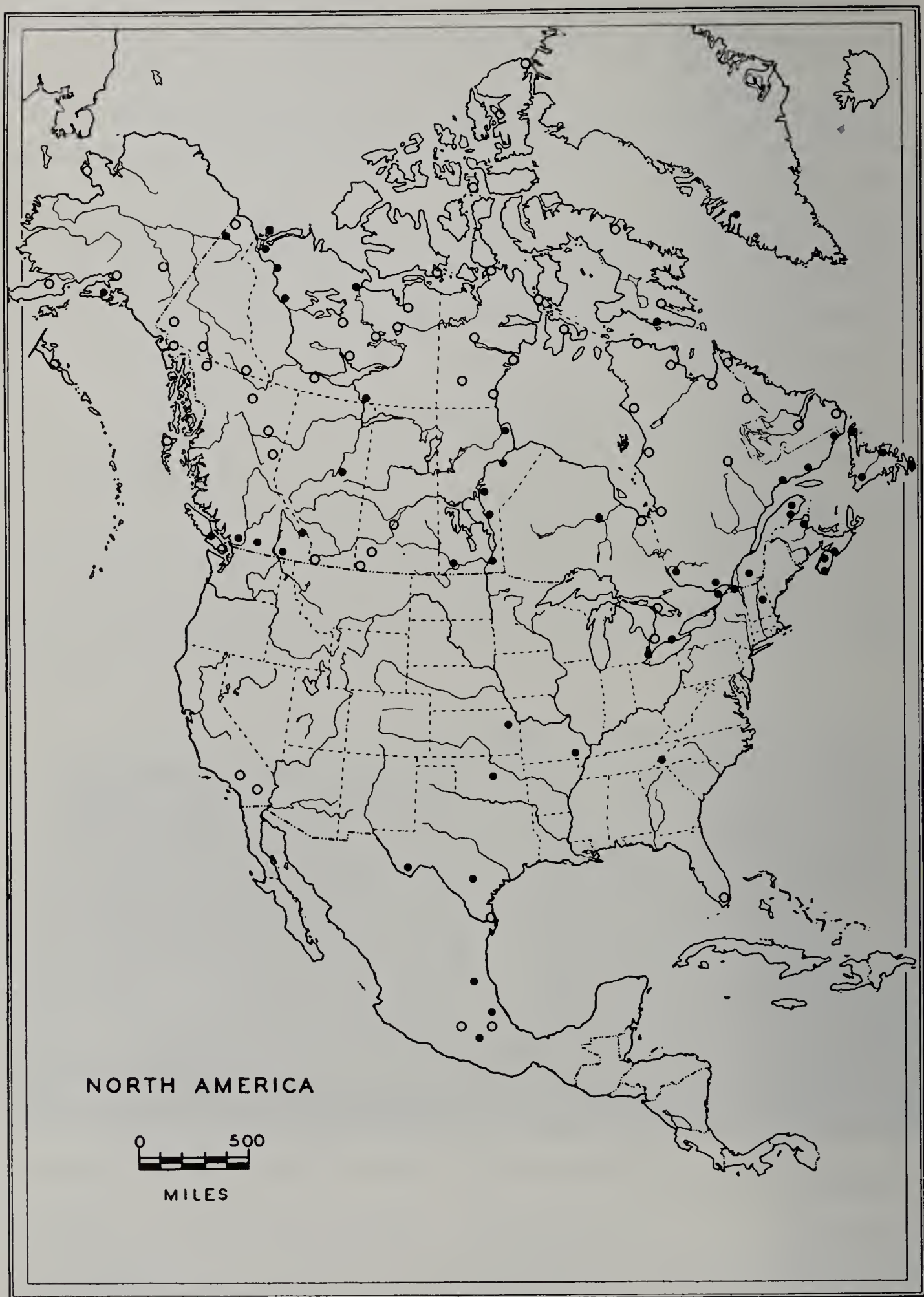


FIGURE 1. Main room of Coleoptera section. FIGURE 2. Drawer of *Calligrapha* showing method of arrangement.

specimens, was recently acquired. In addition to the main North American collection, there is a modest Palearctic collection.

The collection now stands as the most comprehensive collection of the Coleoptera of the northern two-fifths of the continent. An important feature is that it reveals fairly adequately the distributions of a large number of species that are poorly represented in other collections.

It is noteworthy that many North American beetles have their northern limits somewhere in Canada, instead of ceasing abruptly at the United States—Canada border.—
E. C. BECKER, W. J. BROWN, H. F. HOWDEN, *Entomology Research Institute, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Canada.*



Map. North American localities surveyed by staff of the Entomology Research Institute: ●, localities where the party included at least one coleopterist; ○, localities visited by staff other than coleopterists.